

**HANDBOOKS OF ENGLISH  
LITERATURE. THE  
AGE OF WORDSWORTH**

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Handbooks of English Literature. The Age of Wordsworth by C. H. Herford

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HANDBOOKS  
OF  
ENGLISH LITERATURE  
EDITED BY  
THE LATE PROFESSOR HALES  
THE AGE OF WORDSWORTH



THE AGE OF  
WORDSWORTH

BY  
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TO MY STUDENTS  
PAST AND PRESENT



## PREFACE.

By the 'Age of Wordsworth' will be understood, for the purpose of the present volume, the period from 1798 to 1830,—from the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* to the first appearance of Tennyson. Both dates correspond to well-defined turning points of literary history; the great careers which belong to the period at all mostly begin and end, as careers, within it, and conflicting claims for their possession have not caused serious debate. In a few cases, indeed, I fear I have unfairly solved the question by Solomon's method of bisection—laying hands without ceremony upon that portion of Keble or of Carlyle that was mine, and leaving the untouched remnant to the historian of the following period. In all such cases, however, their entire omission would have left a palpable hiatus in my work. The task of presenting this vast and complex literature with some semblance of order and unity has been no light one. If I have in any degree succeeded in that aim, it is by availing myself of the fact, hardly, I think, deniable by any student of the period, that almost everything of importance in its literature stood in some relation to the far-reaching and many-sided revival of imaginative power commonly known as Romanticism,—a relation often of antagonism or disclaim, of imperfect sympathy or half-hearted recoil, but still a relation. Romanticism is thus the organizing conception of the present volume. The introduction attempts to give